

MDW ACCIDENT PREVENTION PLAN HANDBOOK

SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Safety Training Goal: Understand the causes of slips, trips, and falls and how to prevent them.

1. Introduction.

a. The leading causes of workers compensation claims within MDW are almost equally divided between slips, trips, and falls and back injuries. This training session will address slips, trips, and falls prevention and another training session will discuss back injury prevention.

b. The increased cost of the Federal Employee's Compensation Act Program (FECA) is a serious problem. Compensation costs include expenditures for paying medical expenses and continuation of pay for personnel that have experienced injuries and illnesses on the job. Costs are also incurred for soldiers who have experienced injuries and illnesses on AND off the job.

2. Discussion.

a. Even though we call injuries and fatalities "accidents", the fact is that almost all of them can be prevented. Analysis of injuries within MDW indicate that not only are slips, trips, and falls one of the leading causes of injuries but that these types of injuries are preventable. The common reasons for falls include:

(1) Inattention to walking/working surfaces.

(2) Failure to use handrails or ladders.

b. Prevention of slips, trips, and falls requires learning how to recognize potential hazards and taking the appropriate corrective actions. Since slips, trips, and falls are as common in the home as they are in the workplace, preventing these types of injuries should be a part of everyone's daily life.

c. Definitions:

(1) Slips. Slips occur when there is a loss of balance caused by too little friction between your feet and the walking surface. For example, when you walk on ice or a wet surface, this loss of friction generally results in a fall.

(2) Trips. Trips occur when there is a loss of balance caused by an interference between your forward motion and an object. For example, bumping against an object while you are moving fast enough to be thrown off balance. As with slips, trips may cause a fall. Cluttered walkways, poor lighting, taking shortcuts, loose or uneven flooring are some of the most

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common causes of trips.

(3) Falls. Falls occur when you move too far off your center of balance. For example, falling down a flight of stairs, falling off a ladder, or tripping over the curled edge of a floor mat. A slip or trip often results in a fall.

d. Prevention of slips, trips, and falls:

(1) Preventing Slips.

(a) Keep an eye out for hazardous walking conditions, such as hidden steps. When turning a corner or stepping outside, look for steps that might not be immediately obvious.

(b) Be aware of and cautious when walking on floors that have been waxed but not buffed.

(c) Watch out for any rug that hasn't been tacked down or does not have a nonskid mat under it - it may slip out when stepped on.

(d) Use caution when walking over loose tiles, bricks, floorboards, or pavement.

(e) Spread sand on icy walkways during the winter. Clean up spills immediately, such as water or coffee.

(f) When possible, use an absorbent for oil or grease on floors, particularly on shop floors.

(2) Preventing Trips.

(a) Arrange furniture so there is a clear path. If an obstacle is in the way, move it or walk around it - avoid climbing over or on it.

(b) Store materials in cabinets or closets not in hallways aisles, or on the stairs.

(c) Pick up small things, such as paper clips or pencils.

(d) Make sure electrical, phone, or other types of cords don't create a tripping hazard.

(e) Keep cabinet and file drawers closed - even when you think it's unlikely that someone could bump into them.

(3) Preventing Falls.

(a) Ensure adequate lighting.

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(b) Don't substitute a stack of furniture or boxes for a sturdy, properly balanced ladder.

(c) Repair or replace stair tread(s) which are cracked or worn. Non-skid mats are a good idea.

(d) Wear good shoes appropriate for the type of walking surface. High heels or platforms offer less stability.

(e) Keep all four legs of your chair on the floor. Make sure that chairs are in good repair.

c. Know how to use a ladder.

(1) Select the right ladder for the job.

(2) Inspect the ladder before using it. Use a ladder that has safety feet. Never use a defective ladder.

(3) Have someone hold the bottom of the ladder and make sure nobody bumps into it.

(4) Never allow more than one person at a time on the ladder. Climb and descend the ladder cautiously.

(5) Move the ladder. Don't overreach by leaning too far to either side.

(6) Face the front and avoid twisting or turning on the ladder. DO NOT stand on the top rung.

(7) Follow the 4 to 1 rule. Ladders should be one rung length out of every four rungs to where the ladder touches the wall.

3. Conclusion.

a. Slip, trip, and fall hazards are everywhere. You can keep the odds against these type of accidents in your favor by keeping safety in mind and by recognizing, avoiding, and controlling these potential hazards.

b. Pace yourself. Allow yourself time so you don't have to hurry.

c. Watch out for other people. Change direction slowly.

d. Keep areas well lighted.

e. Be aware of where you are going, what you are doing and keep a lookout for hazards that others might miss.

f. Report any hazards you can't correct to yourself to your supervisor or installation safety office.

Prevent Slips and Falls

While slips and falls may not get as much attention as other workplace injuries, they cause more accidents than electric current, fires, burns and poisons combined. Falls typically account for about 12 percent of all workplace fatalities each year and cause 20 percent of disabling injuries.

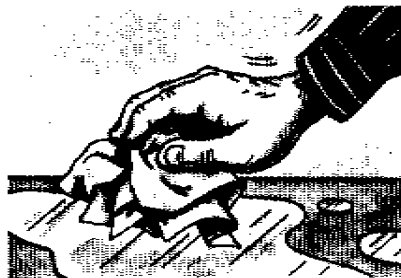
Slips and falls occur on all types of surfaces and at all elevations. You can lose your balance as easily on a greasy floor as on scaffolding 100 feet above the pavement. Slips from heights result in a greater number of fatalities, but tumbles on level surfaces cause a larger number of injuries. Good housekeeping can prevent many accidents.

Clear Danger From Your Path

Clutter in the work area is a common fall hazard. Tools, boxes, buckets, boards, pipes or rope left lying around can cause a bad fall. Keep work areas, especially storage rooms and walkways, free of clutter.

Watch for Wet and Slippery Surfaces

If you work in a job where cleanliness and sanitation are critical, the work surface may be constantly wet, or may change from dry to wet before you know it. When you see water, oil or any type of spill, clean it up right away and mark it with a sign, paper towels or wastebasket; then report it. If you must walk on a wet surface, slow down and take short steps to stay balanced. It's easy to slip if you walk fast or turn sharp corners. Watch for moisture around storage tanks and grinding operations. Beware of oil or grease on concrete.



Use the Proper Equipment for the Job

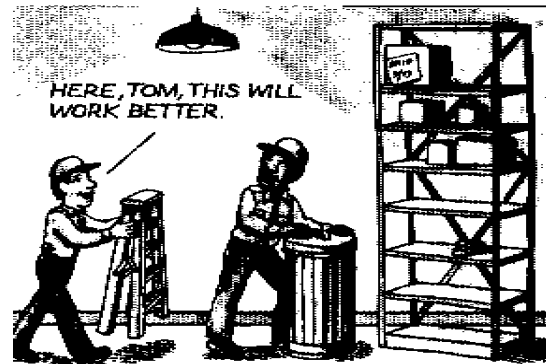
Falls from heights often occur when fixed ladders and regulation climbing equipment are unavailable. You may think you'll save time by improvising a ladder or a harness when none are handy, but you're setting the stage for trouble when you use makeshift equipment. Falls also happen when someone uses the proper equipment incorrectly. Make sure ladders are seated firmly on the ground and at a proper distance from the building.

Shed Light on Fall Hazards

Always turn on the lights before entering a dark room, even if you're only going in for a minute. Exercise caution on poorly lit stairways and passages. Replace light bulbs as soon as they burn out.

Use Dollies and Trucks Correctly

On a busy day, it may be tempting to overload a dolly or truck to make the job go faster.



However, pushing a load that obstructs your view can lead to a collision and fall. Make sure you can see where you're going, even if it means an extra trip.

Use Ladders Safely

Choose the right ladder for the job and inspect it before you use it. Avoid makeshift ladders and climbing gear. Climb carefully. Avoid overreaching or making other unsafe movements that can result in falls.

Wear Protective Footwear

When wet or greasy floors are a given, antislip footwear can help you get a grip on slippery surfaces. Wooden shoes or cleated, nonslip rubber or neoprene soles can provide protection under these conditions. Strap-on cleats can keep you steady on snow and ice.

Falls—

The Most Common Office Injury

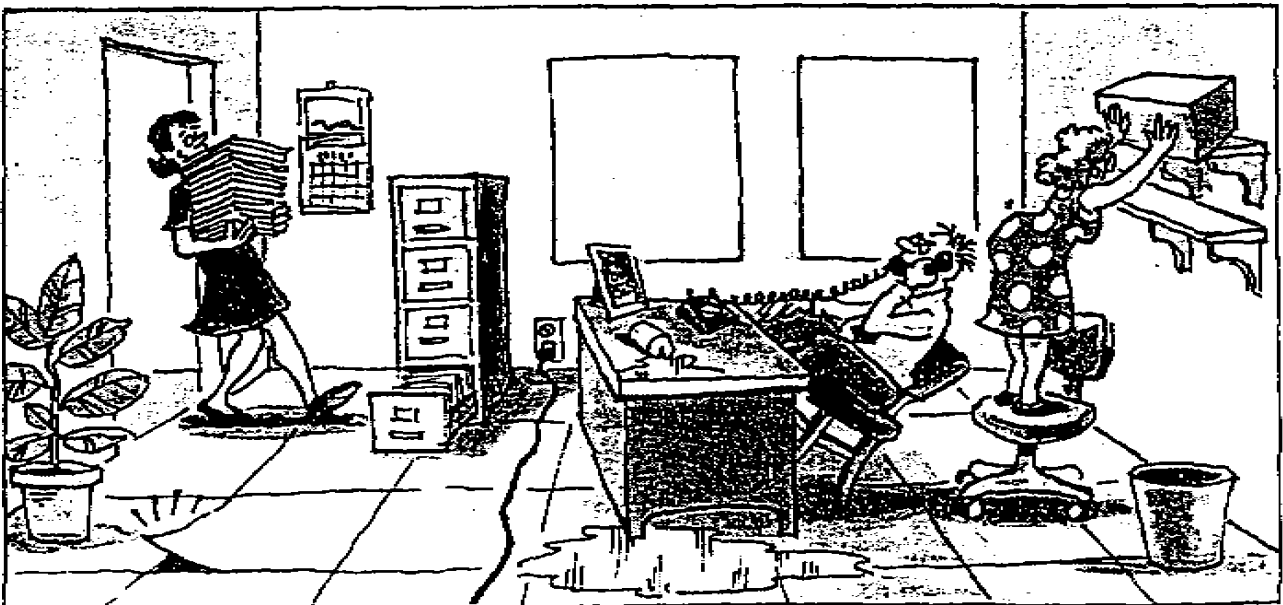
As common as slips, trips and falls are, the injuries they cause are probably the most preventable of office emergencies.

Have you ever had to watch out for a floormat with a curled-up corner, a carpet seam that has unraveled or spilled coffee that no one has bothered to clean up? Have you been slowed down by a newly waxed floor, a rolling chair that rolled too far or a burned-out light bulb that leaves a hallway in semidarkness? What about a file drawer someone forgot to close, an extension cord sticking out from under a desk, or a box of books "temporarily" awaiting an out-of-the-way storage site?

Well, you and your coworkers don't have to become injury statistics. Here's what you can do:

- ☒ Reroute extension cords and computer cables away from walkways.
- ☒ Clean up spills immediately, even other people's.
- ☒ If you see even a small item on the floor—a pencil, a paper clip, a sheet of paper—pick it up.
- ☒ Report loose carpeting, damaged flooring or burned-out light bulbs to your supervisor.
- ☒ When something's out of reach, use a ladder or a step stool, rather than furniture, boxes or piles of books.
- ☒ Make sure your pathway is clear and that your view is not blocked *before* you lift anything.
- ☒ Wear low-heeled shoes with nonslip soles.
- ☒ Close drawers after every use.
- ☒ Avoid bending, twisting and leaning backwards while seated. And keep all four chair legs on the floor.
- ☒ Even if you think you know your way "blindfolded," look where you're going when you walk.
- ☒ Get help before carrying awkward or heavy loads.
- ☒ Store purses and briefcases away.
- ☒ If you have to use a ladder in front of a door, make sure the door is locked or blocked while you're working.
- ☒ Walk, don't run.

Remember, you can't count on someone else to report or correct a problem. Act as if the ball is always in your court. When it comes to preventing falls, you can help lower the statistics—at least in your office.



There are seven fall hazards in this picture. Can you find them?

FALL PREVENTION FOR OFFICE WORKERS

Avoiding Slips and Falls At The Office

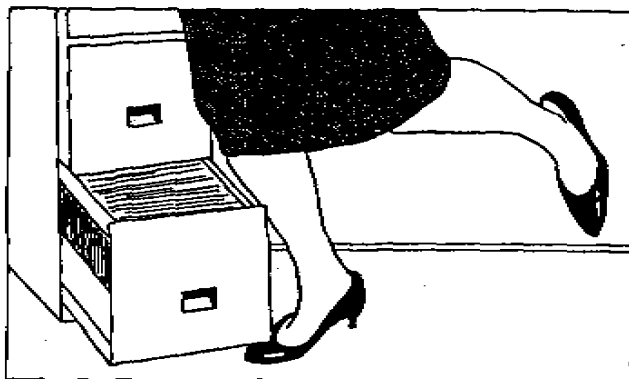
It may come as a surprise that falls are the most common type of office injury. Yet almost all falls can be prevented by using common safety sense and learning how to recognize and correct typical fall hazards in the office environment.

Understanding Balance

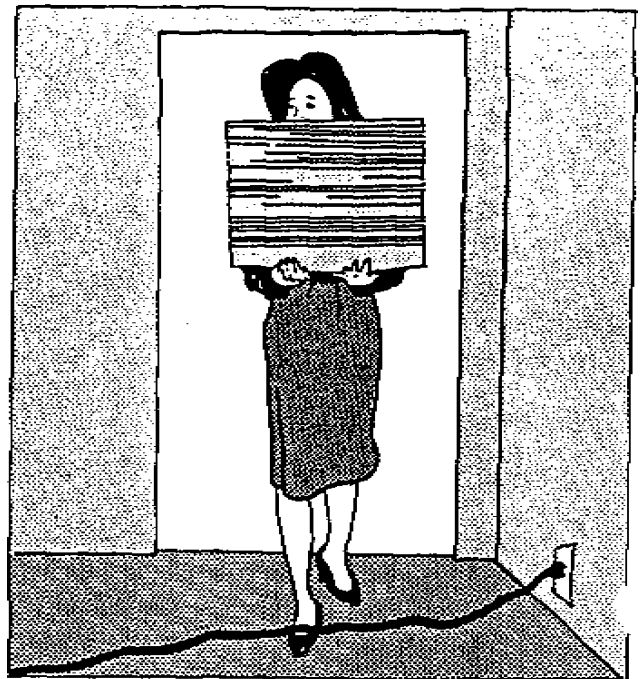
A fall occurs when you lose your balance and your footing. In short, your center of gravity is displaced and there's nowhere to go but down. You may be thrown off balance by a slip (on a wet floor, for example) or a trip (over an obstacle in your path), but once you lose your footing and support, a fall is inevitable.

Common Fall Hazards

One of the most common causes of office falls is tripping over an open desk or file drawer. Bending while seated in an unstable chair and tripping over electrical cords or wires are other common hazards. Office falls are frequently caused by using makeshift "ladders" (such as a chair, or a stack of boxes) and by slipping on wet floors (by the water cooler or coffee machine, for example). Loose carpeting, objects stored in halls or walkways, and inadequate lighting are other hazards that invite accidental falls. Fortunately, all of these fall hazards are preventable. The following checklist can help you stop a fall before it happens.



One of the most common causes of office falls is tripping over an open drawer.



Look before you walk—make sure your pathway is clear.

Fall Prevention Checklist

- ☐ Look before you walk—make sure your pathway is clear.
- ☐ Close drawers after every use.
- ☐ Avoid bending, twisting, and leaning backwards while seated.
- ☐ Secure electrical cords and wires away from walkways.
- ☐ Always use an appropriate stepladder for overhead reaching.
- ☐ Clean up spills immediately.
- ☐ If you see anything on the floor—a pen, a paper clip, etc.—pick it up.
- ☐ Report loose carpeting or damaged flooring to appropriate manager.
- ☐ Make sure walkways are well-lighted.
- ☐ Walk, don't run!



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Watch for Slippery Surfaces



Slippery surfaces often take you by surprise. Wet, greasy or muddy floors are dangerous under any conditions, but they present special hazards when you're pushing a hand truck, lifting loads or moving and stacking pipe, lumber or sheet metal. Loads on dollies and hand trucks can block your view of hazardous surfaces ahead. And if your foot makes contact with an unexpected oil slick when you're lifting a box or trying to balance a 2-by-4, the consequences may be especially painful. Here are some tips to help you prevent slips when you're lifting loads and moving materials:

Be Alert for Changing Conditions

Remember: Slippery floors can occur when you least expect it.

- ✓ Plan your route before you move or lift a load.
- ✓ Identify greasy, wet and oily floors before you carry or push materials.
- ✓ Anticipate changing environmental conditions. For example, if you're pushing a dolly down an aisle near a "wet" operation, prepare to encounter spills.

Exercise Caution in Entryways

Water tracked inside from ice and snow can present unexpected hazards.

- ✓ Keep your eyes open for potential puddles near doorways.

Watch for Slippery Stairs, Ladders and Ramps

Greasy or wet stairways, ladder rungs and ramps can be a big surprise because you can't see them in advance.

- ✓ Look before you climb.
- ✓ Watch out for metal floors and ice on outdoor ramps.

Wear Slip-Resistant Shoes

Safety shoes are available for every possible working condition. Ask your employer about the most appropriate footwear for your workplace and conditions.

- ✓ The best work shoes have soles that are flexible enough to conform to a walking surface, but rough enough to create some friction.
- ✓ Icy surfaces may require strap-on cleats.

Clean Up Your Spills

Leaving behind a spill can cause a coworker to slip and fall.

- ✓ When you see water, oil or any type of spill, clean it up right away.
- ✓ Mark spills with a sign, paper towels or a wastebasket.
- ✓ Report spills.

Take Time and Walk Tall

Slips occur most often when you rush.

- ✓ Walk flat-footed across slippery surfaces.
- ✓ Keep a solid center of balance.
- ✓ Place your whole foot against the floor and you'll be less likely to slip and fall.

STEPS AND STAIRS

Falls at home are the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., particularly among the elderly. Young children and toddlers are also at a higher risk from falls. Keep stairs in good repair so that they don't rock, slip or sink when someone steps on them. For those with impaired vision, mark the length of each step with bright or glow-in-the-dark tape, especially the bottom step. Here are additional guidelines for step and stair safety.



Carpeting

Many people are injured from falls due to tripping on worn or ripped carpets on stairs. Be sure your stair carpeting is in good condition and securely fastened along its entire length.

Open Stairs

Stairs with no backing, just open rising steps, may be far enough apart to trap a child's head. Attach boards to the back of each step, indoors and outdoors, so that there is no gap between steps.

Lights

A stairway should be well-lit along its entire length. Switches for all stairway lights should be located at both the top and bottom of the stairway.

Safety Gates

Use baby safety gates at both the top and bottom of stairways to prevent little

ones from either falling down stairs or climbing them unsupervised. Replace any accordion-style baby gates not approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Such gates have large v-shaped and diamond-shaped openings that can trap babies' heads and lead to strangulation. Many new styles of gates, such as those with a rigid mesh screen, do not carry this risk.

Objects on Stairs

Immediately put away any loose objects you find on the stairs. Because of the narrow area of each step, it may be difficult to avoid stepping and slipping on a small rubber ball, for instance.

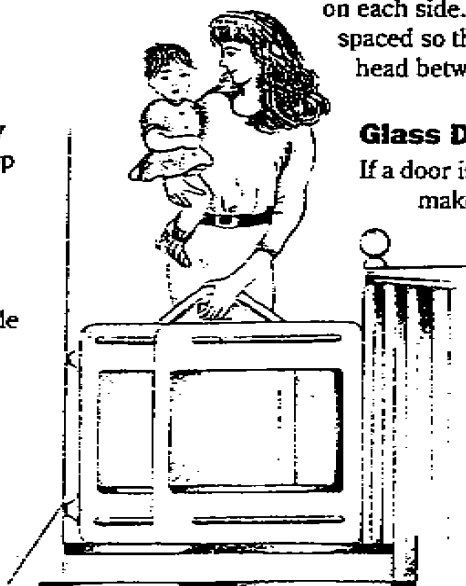


Handrails

Every stairway, no matter how short or infrequently used, should have at least one solid and continuous handrail. For older people in the house make sure there are two handrails, one on each side. Vertical handrail supports should be spaced so that a child could not stick his or her head between them and get trapped.

Glass Doors and Stairs

If a door is located at the bottom of a stairway make sure it isn't made of glass. If someone does fall down the stairs they could crash through a glass door, seriously compounding their injuries.



Prevent Falls From Heights

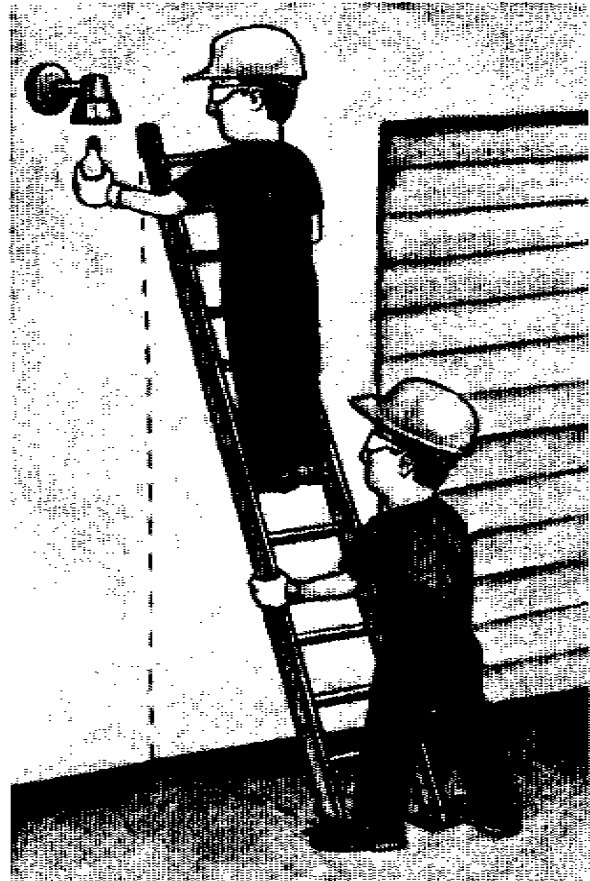
One of every five work-related injuries is a fall, and about half of these falls are from heights. Although falls from elevated places are less frequent than slips or trips, a fall from a height poses a greater risk of death or serious physical injury.

Recognize Hazards

- ✓ You can lose your footing and fall from ladders, scaffolding, bridges, walkways, construction sites, roofs, material hoists, towers and stairwells.
- ✓ Surfaces covered with grease, oil and other slippery contaminants create hazards at high elevations.
- ✓ Falls from heights often occur on one-time jobs when fixed ladders and platforms aren't available. While it may be tempting to improvise climbing equipment or add height to a ladder by placing it on a box, it's safer to avoid using makeshift equipment.
- ✓ Using the proper equipment incorrectly is a common fall hazard. For example, a ladder may be set on loose or uneven ground, or too close or too far from the building or structure that supports it.
- ✓ Tools can add danger at high elevations. Some workers slip and fall when their belts are loaded with heavy, unbalanced tools or when they attempt to raise and lower tools from power cords.

Take Precautions

- ✓ Wear slip-resistant footwear, such as shoes with cleats.
- ✓ Raise and lower tools and equipment with a rope tied to the body of the tool, not its power cord. Always unplug power tools before raising or lowering them.
- ✓ Use safety cages and fall restraint devices when available.
- ✓ Look before you walk on scaffolds, bridges and walkways. Make sure your pathway is clear.
- ✓ Walk; don't run on scaffolding, bridges and walkways.
- ✓ Use the right equipment for the job; don't make your own climbing equipment.
- ✓ Always wear a hard hat when working at heights.



LADDER SAFETY

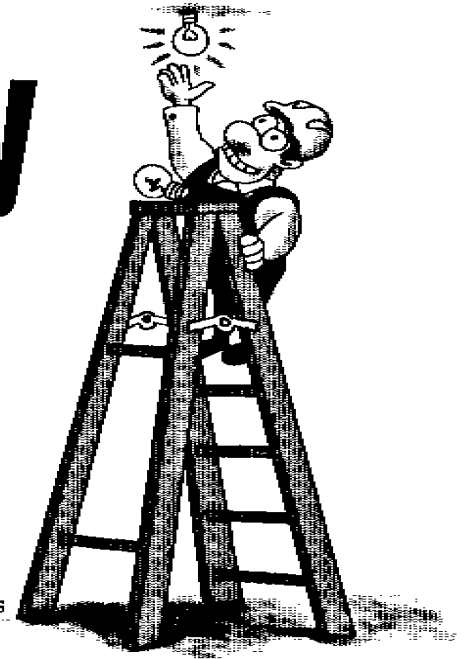
- ✓ Use the 4-to-1 ladder rule: Set the base of your ladder 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet of ladder height.
- ✓ Extend a ladder 3 feet beyond the contact with its support.
- ✓ Never use the top three rungs of an extension ladder or the top two steps of a stepladder.
- ✓ Avoid overreaching from a ladder or work platform.
- ✓ Place your ladder on a solid, level surface.
- ✓ Tie off your ladder or have someone support its base.
- ✓ Be sure all ladder rungs have flat steps and are treated with an abrasive coating.
- ✓ Hold the rails, not the rungs, when you climb a ladder. This helps prevent the transfer of slippery contaminants to your hands or gloves.

Working Safely With Ladders

Most ladder accidents are preventable. All it takes to avoid an accident is the right ladder in good working condition and solid placement of the ladder before climbing on it.

Type I ■ industrial ladder
■ holds up to 250 pounds

Type II ■ household ladder
■ holds up to 200 pounds



FOLLOW THESE RULES FOR LADDER SAFETY:

Choose the Right Ladder for the Job

- ✓ Make sure your ladder is strong enough and long enough for the job.
- ✓ Check the ladder's rating and don't exceed the limits. Remember to include the weight of the tools or materials you plan to use.
- ✓ If you work around electrical wires, don't use a metal ladder. Use a dry, wooden or nonconductive, fiberglass ladder for this kind of work.
- ✓ If you're not sure about the type of ladder to use, check with your supervisor.

Inspect the Ladder Before You Use It

- ✓ Make sure that the spreaders can be locked in place when open.
- ✓ Be sure straight ladders have safety feet. Metal ladders, either straight or step, should have rubber or plastic feet as well as step coverings.
- ✓ Be certain the ladder's steps are wide enough for you to spread your feet for balance.
- ✓ Check for loose or bent rungs.
- ✓ Look for cracked side rails on wooden or plastic ladders and for bent parts on metal ladders.
- ✓ Replace any missing parts and tighten loose hardware, but don't try to repair major structural damage. Get a new ladder instead.

Set Up the Ladder Safely

- ✓ Place your ladder on a firm, level surface with its feet parallel to the wall it's resting against.
- ✓ If you have to use the ladder in a busy area, use a barricade to prevent collisions and lock any nearby doors that open toward you.
- ✓ Follow the 4-to-1 rule: Set the base of the ladder 1 foot away from a wall or other support for every 4 feet of ladder height.
- ✓ Be sure the ladder is standing on stable ground and ask someone to hold the base or tie off the ladder securely.
- ✓ Make sure a ladder extends 3 feet beyond the top of the structure it's resting against.

Climb Cautiously

- ✓ When using a ladder, never climb on the top two rungs.
- ✓ When you climb up or down a ladder, be sure to face it.
- ✓ Hold on to the side rails with both hands.
- ✓ Carry only necessary tools on your belt; use a rope to raise heavier equipment.
- ✓ If you use power equipment, make sure the ladder is securely tied.
- ✓ Avoid overreaching.
- ✓ Use the "belt buckle" rule: Always keep your body centered between the rails.
- ✓ Allow only one person on a ladder at a time.
- ✓ Wear shoes with nonskid soles.
- ✓ Make sure your shoes and hands are clean and dry.
- ✓ Be sure to tie off the ladder or have someone support the base.

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